1884

THREE WAYS OF SALVATION:

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

OPENING OF THE SESSION

OF

MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE,

OCTOBER 2ND, 1884.

BY

J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, M.A.

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,

14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;
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THREE WAYS OF SALVATION.

No one, it has been said, truly knows his own language who does not know another also. The observation is equally true of religions. No one truly knows his own religion who does not know another also. For differences of name signify, after all, more than varieties of speech, and go deeper than changes of colour. They correspond to differences of inward experience, to variations of modes of thought, which demand respectful sympathy wherever they are sincere; nay, more, they must be approached, not with the ill-concealed scorn of a critic of superstitions, but with the loving earnestness of a disciple who seeks to learn the secret of the heart living in forms that have neither charm for his sentiment nor reason for his intellect. Only the prophet may stand alone upon the mount of vision, and bid all the world ascend and see. He speaks of eternal things from no inductions of experience, but from the inner perceptions of the soul. What he utters is no comparison of theologies; it springs from the immediate apprehension of the presence of the living God; the altar flame is kindled at no lesser source than the everlasting light. I well know, Gentlemen, that only as you stand on the same heights, and possess the same directness and independence of insight, will your words be charged with

their fullest power. Only as you yield yourselves the willing servants of a loftier necessity of truth and righteousness and love, will you open the way of divine life to weary and struggling hearts. But this capacity it is not ours to bestow. No college can command the gifts of the spirit; no teacher can do that for which the trusting heart waits on God alone. We can only help you to clear away some of the obstacles that may check the free growth towards a wider life; we can only try to disclose some sources of thought, unlock some channels of impulse, and lay open some springs of devotion, through which the streams of Heaven may well up within.

For this reason I invite you this session to enter on the study of other phases of thought outside the range of our own immediate history. For us, indeed, I might plead that this discipline is peculiarly needful. The smallness of our numbers, our protest against the doctrinal restraints of the great majority of the Churches, necessarily cut us off in large measure from the various bodies which contribute to the religious life of our fellow-countrymen; and our rejection of the central article of the Christian faith, as it is commonly interpreted, secludes us still further from their sympathy. Forced into this unwilling attitude of isolation, we have too readily fallen back on our conviction of our own superiority, hardly caring to inquire what is the inner meaning of doctrines which we have discarded, wherein still lies their power over thought and deed. This arrogant indifference is one of the worst offences in those who seek to be the mediators between the past and the future—who aspire to assist, if not positively to guide and direct, the transformations of theological conception under the influence of modern ideas. It is in part to guard you against this besetting temptation that I propose for your

investigation certain selected types of Christian faith and character. Hitherto our survey of Christianity has led us to view it especially as a great moral power operating upon individual and social life. We have asked what fresh ideas it introduced, what changes these effected, and what modifications they in their turn sustained in the development of new forms of civil and religious order. To detach these phenomena and give them the utmost distinctness in our field of view, we passed by the great doctrinal growths which, from another side, may be treated as the essence of Christian history. We endeavoured to deal with it, not as a scheme of divine truth, but as a principle of inward life. We regarded the central aim of the Church as the warfare with sin; its fundamental idea we found to be the embodiment of the divine righteousness in human society by the establishment of the kingdom of heaven in the hearts of all men. On this, in the last resort, were reared the vast dogmatic constructions which ever since have claimed the name of orthodox; and here is the real root of the vitality of all hierarchies. But behind this aspect of Christianity, as the manifestation of the ethical passion in its noblest form, lies the further question of its source—whence did it issue, and on what has it been sustained? To this the reply has always been sure and simple—in the pervading presence of the holy God. There and there only is a power adequate to so great a task. To hear this answer in its clearest tones, we must join once more the band of disciples on the mountain side, and catch the accents of Jesus as he seeks to set men in fellowship with this divine life; we must fight the good fight with Paul, or enter through the Fourth Gospel the sanctuary of worship in the spirit. But we have to deal also with the solutions which reach us along the lines of later history, and of these I shall lay

before you, in some detail, chiefly two. The four great Latin Fathers whom the instinct of the Roman Catholic Church has selected pre-eminently as its representative Doctors—Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory—supply us with the view which emerged from the profound moral struggle of Christianity with the expiring philosophy and the corrupt Paganism of the Empire. There we shall find those conceptions of God and the soul, of duty and destiny, which lay at the foundation of the religious life of the Middle Ages, and were renewed—at least, in some elements—with fresh force at the Reformation. And in the study of modern Catholicism we shall learn to understand, and perhaps to some extent to respect, the ideas that animate the most extraordinary hierarchy which the world has ever seen. Among the religious phenomena of our own day, the increase of sacerdotalism in this country is certainly not one of the least noteworthy, and its ideal aims can nowhere be so well studied as in the system which gave it birth and has planted its agents in every quarter of the globe.

Christianity, however, is not the only form of Theism, nor the only vehicle of moral energy, which history presents; and while we investigate the great spiritual forces which have determined some of its chief developments, it may be not uninstructive to compare with them some other manifestations of the religious life. For this purpose, after a preliminary survey of some lower types, I shall lay before you a sketch of the growth of religious thought in India. Through a subject so vast, and in a field where generations of scholars must follow the steps of the noble pioneers of inquiry ere full assurance is obtained, I can only offer you but imperfect guidance; and it may seem a rash presumption to attempt to lead you through so bewildering a maze.

But the devoted labours of the last ten years have placed a large amount of new material in the student's hands. The publication and translation of important texts has proceeded with surprising rapidity, and an enthusiastic spirit of enterprise and research has opened the path to those who have patience to wait while the first obscurities are slowly cleared away. And how extraordinary is the panorama which is then revealed! There is a religious life continuous among the same people on the same soil for more than three thousand years. There is an order of society which had existed for centuries before our forefathers first set foot upon our shores, and still abides essentially unchanged. There is an ancient literature which, even at the time of Alexander's conquests, exceeded in richness the literature of Greece. There are epics on a far larger scale than Homer; philosophical systems which may challenge Plato and Aristotle; there are mystics who speak a language strangely familiar; reformers who fought battles for spiritual freedom like Luther; above all, the noble form of Gotama Buddha, whose legend presents such strange affinities with Christian story. In the great procession of religions which passes across the scene, among the multitudinous forms of faith and usage which past and present unceasingly exhibit, it may well be difficult to thread our way. One point alone can I single out for our consideration now—and this I must propound in the shape of a question to be kept before you in your subsequent studies, rather than to be answered in my allotted hour—what light do the great faiths of India throw upon the connection of religion and morals? Have they sought to act as the transforming powers of personal and social life? The natural conscience says concerning duty, 'You must,' and only adds concerning faith, 'if you can.' The Christian

conscience finds in faith the animating and sustaining force of duty. The scientific conscience seeks no other foundation than that which ministers to life and an enlarged view of utility, so as to dispense with faith altogether. Can Indian Theism make any contributions to this great discussion? Here, perhaps, we may indicate some points of contact between the lines of European and of Hindu thought which are hereafter to engage our attention.

I.

The conquest of Northern India by the Aryan immigrants was followed by a long period of comparative repose. The dispersion of the new settlers in a realm of extraordinary diversity of natural wealth, the influence upon them of a different climate, their contact with the rites and faiths of the tribes whom they subdued—these and a hundred other causes contributed to modify profoundly the spirit of the old religion embodied in the Vedic hymns. The Rig Veda itself contains more than one utterance of the nascent speculative philosophy, as it approached the question of the existence of the ancient gods, and applied the solvents of its dialectic to the problems of the world and life. And the next great deposit of sacred literature in the Upanishads reveals the development of fresh modes of thought, out of which finally emerged a complete scheme of salvation, reared upon beliefs and conceptions altogether remote from the joyous energy of the race in its youth. Man found himself in a scene of perpetual change. Everything arose only to disappear. The splendour of the earth lay beneath the doom of impermanence. The infinite variety of its powers, the complex play of its forces, the manifold beauty, the majestic strength, of its noblest forms —all these contained within them the secret of their end,

they were involved in one law of decay and dissolution. Nay, the next life, so far as it resembled this, must still be passed under the sovereignty of death; that, too, must reach its turn, only to begin again as the stream of life ebbed and flowed through the great cycle of existence. Bound by this chain of birth, of death, and of re-birth to die once more, the weary spirit looked out upon a world that had caught him in the grasp of its necessity, with passionate longing for escape. In the midst of this endless plurality, was there no principle of unity to be found in which was peace? Was there no deliverance from the cruel need of continual transit through forms which only came into being that they might cease to be? Was there no rescue from the sea of transmigration? no guidance over its restless waves to the further shore?

The answer seems to have come from two sides, and the replies were harmonised and ultimately combined. One issued from the school of higher religious thought, the other from the investigations of philosophy. The search for unity through the circles of the gods, fixed ultimately on the conception of the Vedic Brahman as the essence that lay behind them all. It had been known first as the elevating and inspiring power of prayer. But prayer was the force that moved the gods to fulfil the suppliant's desires; was it not, then, in some sense superior to them, might it not be identified with that which lived in them as the creative and sustaining principle of all existence? So it was seen in all the sources of energy and modes of power around. It lay hid in the food which held the secret of life; it dwelt in the spoken word which was the medium alike of authority and of devotion; it had a home in the sun in the firmament, or in the priest and the fire at the altar; it was the force of all forces, the unity of all

plurality in the external world. Must not the way of deliverance, then, from the sorrows of diversity and change, lie in the discovery of the Brahman and in union with it?—And the same conception was reached by another path. What was it that gave unity to life? In the confused succession of sensations and ideas, the multiplicity of inward experiences that seemed often in contradiction with each other, was there no stability, no centre of equilibrium and rest? There was; behind the images of vision, behind the echoes of sound, behind memory and hope, behind endeavour and resolve, lay that whereon they all appeared and passed away, the Self. For this was not the body with its organs, nor did it consist of the feelings of which they were the instruments, or the ideas which rose as these declined. Deeper than sense, deeper even than thought, is the Self through which they play. He who retires to this sanctuary finds that it is one; it has no parts, and so is above the sphere of dimension; it has no passions or desires, and thus is beyond the reach of change. Neither time nor space exist for it; it belongs to a realm in which they are no more.—But what is the relation of the principle of unity here discovered within to the principle of unity discerned without? The answer could not be doubtful; they are the same. The Self in the heart is truly identical with the Brahman in the world. Brahman is the great Self, wherein all Selfs that seem separate and individual are one.

Into the twofold doctrine of the Brahman I may not enter here. There is a lower knowledge and a higher. The lower described the nature of the personal Brahman, his relation to the world as its creator, ruler, providential guide, and ultimate destroyer, when its cycle of existence had run out. It was in fact a system of pure Theism; but

it was after all only an accommodation to our imperfect apprehension, and it called for no prophets, for it had no saving word. That lay in the higher knowledge, which dealt with the Brahman as raised above all attributes and predications. His true name is, 'No, no.' At this sublime elevation the only reality is pure being. The conceptions which had adhered to him in the lower knowledge all drop away. He is no longer the all-knowing, the all-joyous, the all-holy. These are the qualities of that which has something external to itself, which is limited, therefore, by personality. In the Brahman, however, all distinctions have disappeared, the still depths of his nature abide in infinite repose. It was to this higher knowledge that speculation loved to ascend, and among its pale abstractions found its most congenial home. It was the quest of this which was prescribed as the supreme object, it was by the attainment of this that man found deliverance from the endless round of existences and gained salvation—salvation, be it observed, not from sin and its consequences, but from liability to re-birth. The separation of the lower from the higher knowledge provided the Brahmanical order with an easy mode of reconciling the new philosophy with the old ritual of sacrifice, and it allowed a place for morality and a doctrine of good works. But it rested upon one great illusion, viz., the reality of the world. Caught in this net, the Self could not extricate itself till it had recognised its error, owned its mistake, and set itself wholly free from all desire for external things. The lower knowledge bade man practise self-control, give alms, be merciful. But the higher knowledge sought to cut man off from all ethical relations by sinking him in the Self in solitary contemplation. 'Give up the world,' it cried, 'that is one big deception; surrender every wish, quench every longing, suppress every

affection, empty out every thought and feeling that links you to your kind; these are but hindrances to the best and highest; they are veils that blind the inner vision; they are fetters that confine you in the realm of phantoms, and hinder your recognition of the only True.' And so the believer left his home and went forth into the forest to subdue the flesh by abstinence, and to learn to divert his gaze from the dark forms of unreality around him to the glowing radiance of the light within. 'They who know the life of life,' it is said, 'the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, they have comprehended the ancient primeval Brahman. By the mind alone it is to be perceived; there is in it no diversity. He who perceives therein any diversity, goes from death to death. This eternal being that can never be moved, is to be perceived in one way only; it is spotless being, the Ether, the unborn Self, the Eternal. . . . . Wishing for that world, for Brahman only, mendicants leave their homes. Knowing this, the people of old did not wish for offspring. What shall we do with offspring, they said, we who have this Self and this world (of Brahman)? And they, having risen above the desire of sons, wealth, and new worlds, wander about as mendicants. For desire for sons is wealth, and desire for wealth is desire for worlds. Both these are desires only. He, the Self, is to be described as 'No, no.' . . . He, therefore, that knows it, after having become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient, and collected, sees Self in all, sees all as Self.'*

Was this vision, however, within the reach of every one? Could all alike tread this way of deliverance? It lay not within the scope of sense, nor could it be attained by the

* Brihadāranyaka Upanishad, IV. iv. 18—23, in *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XV. p. 179 sq.

determinations of the will. 'He is not apprehended,' so runs the ancient word, 'by the eye, nor by speech, nor by the other senses, nor by penance or good works. When a man's nature has become purified by the serene light of knowledge, then he sees him, meditating on him as without parts.'* But the inward eye cannot open itself. No effort can produce the intuition of the One in the many. It does not depend on the study of the Scriptures; it is the fruit of no investigation; reasoning and argument cannot demonstrate that which is above proof. The knowledge of the Highest can be imparted only by the Highest. 'That Self,' it is declared, 'cannot be gained by the Veda, nor by understanding, nor by learning; he whom the Self chooses, by him can the Self be gained. The Self chooses him as his own.'† And so we are landed in a doctrine of election which forms a strange counterpart to the Augustinian scheme, and was developed ultimately into the regular theological ideas of grace and predestination.‡ But when the Self has chosen, what then? Does it reveal itself to the object of its choice in all the glory of an infinite Righteousness, in the majestic clearness of absolute Truth, in the tender surprise of abiding Love? Alas! it is a blank. It is nothing that mind can apprehend, or soul revere, or heart desire. It is nothing but one huge void. And so the monism of the Brahmanic philosophy ends by plunging the believer into a repose of eternal silence, where all alike, the indi-

* Mundaka Up. III. i. 8, *ibid.* Vol. XV. p. 39.

† Katha Up. I. ii. 23, *ibid.* Vol. XV. p. 11; Mund. Up. III. ii. 3, *ibid.* p. 40: comp. 'He makes him whom he wishes to lead up from these worlds, do a good deed; and the same makes him, whom he wishes to lead down from these worlds, do a bad deed:' Kaushîtaki Up. III. 8, *ibid.* Vol. I. p. 299.

‡ Cf. Deussen, *System des Vedânta*, p. 90; Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 227.

vidual and the universe, science, theology, and morals, are swallowed up in everlasting negation.

II.

Does the history of Christian thought present any spectacle like this? Turn to the great creator of Western theology, and you will find that his fundamental cosmic and ontological conceptions are not all unlike those which I have tried to sketch. The Indian doctrine of the world's impermanence has its parallel in Christian philosophy. 'Whithersoever the soul of man turns itself unless towards Thee,' cries Augustine passionately, 'it is riveted upon sorrows—yea, though it is riveted upon things beautiful. And yet they, out of Thee, were not, and out of the soul were not, unless from Thee. They rise and set, and by rising they begin as it were to be: they grow that they may be perfected, and, perfected, they wax old and wither; and all grow not old, but all wither. So then, when they rise and tend to be, the more quickly they grow that they may be, so much the more they haste not to be. This is the law of them.'* All external things, then, are subject to this necessity of dissolution. The soul entangled in them can find no true peace; they can neither be grasped when they are close at hand, nor followed when they disappear. Is there, then, nowhere any certainty? Turn from the world without, replies Augustine, and look within; there you will find in your self-consciousness the proof of your existence; as in words which almost verbally anticipate the famous formula of Descartes, he argues, 'I think, therefore I am.'† This sanctuary of consciousness is without form or parts; it is without dimensions; but it is there, and

* *Confess.* iv. 15.

† *Solil.* ii. 1, *De Civ. Dei*, xi. 26.

there alone, that we know what being is. Yet it reveals to us something more than ourselves. For it is the home of principles such as are involved in judgments of proportion, equality, beauty, good, which are not arbitrary figments liable to be dissolved as easily as they were combined. They are not self-made; we cannot undo them or reject them; though in us, they are not of us; they are the reflection of the *lex immutabilis omnium artium*, whose great name is Truth.* And so Augustine ascends to the everlasting ground of all existence, that pure being we call God. There all differences fall away. He is. We cannot affirm of him at any moment that he knows or loves or wills, as though these were separate activities of his nature, excluding the simultaneous operation of the rest. He is one, indivisible, immutable. In the fulness of his energies no one can detach itself or act apart, but all are blent in constant harmony; the plenitude of the Godhead exists alone in the simplicity of eternal changeless unity.

Of the daring with which Augustine proceeded to construct the forms of the divine self-consciousness, so as necessarily to evolve a doctine of Trinity—of the difficulties which he experienced in dealing with the term *person*, and in connecting the metaphysical Son with the historical Jesus—I may not pause to speak. I wish here only to point out how near his ontological conceptions approached on some sides to the doctrine of the Brahman. The world is in perpetual flux; it has no true existence. It is known to us only in succession and diversity; but plurality and change can have no place in the unchanging One. Just, therefore, as the Brahmans boldly denied the reality of the world, so likewise did Augustine, though his denial took

* *De Vera Religione*, 52—57; cf. *De Lib. Arbitr.* ii. 34.

a different form. For the world is produced out of *nihil* or nothing, a conception which plays much the same part in Augustine's scheme as the *Māya* or 'illusion' of the Indian schools. Here is the secret of its impermanence; here the key to its multiplicity. Only to this lower realm do space and time belong. Space is nothing but the relations of created things; time is only the order of their sequence. Neither has any true being; for the Eternal Spirit has no extension, it cannot be conceived as diffused throughout immensity; it has no change, and, consequently, no succession. In his often-repeated formula, *semper est ubique totus.* It is only to the created mind that the universe presents a geometry and a chronology. The questions, therefore, why the Cosmos—regarded of course as a sphere—was set in this particular portion of infinitude rather than elsewhere, or what God was doing before he made the world, Augustine brushes aside as meaningless. 'I will not make the answer,' he says, 'which is said to have been jestingly given by one who eluded in his reply the serious difficulties of the question, *Alta scrutantibus gehennas parabat.*'* His solution is more thorough. There was no elsewhere, in which the Cosmos might have been established; till the first creative word was uttered, there was no before. Only with creation did space and time begin to be. Then, first, was the divine *esse* mingled with the *nihil,* and a world, which bore a law of dissolution on its front, arose.†

The philosophical embarrassments of this scheme it is not my object now to exhibit. The Cosmos as we know it, God does not know. The form in which it appears to us is not that which he beholds. The One cannot properly enter the sphere of the many; the Unchanging lives out-

* *Conf.* xi. 12.

† *De Civ. Dei,* xi. xii.

side its great processions of change. Had Augustine developed his philosophy along these lines, it must have led to something not unlike the dim and chilly vacuities of Indian monism. But he was saved from attempting to tread this path of emptiness by the historical situation and by his own personal experience. That is the secret of Augustine's view of human nature, and his doctrine of salvation. It was from the vicissitudes of his own career, and from his observation of the great struggle which he beheld approaching a triumphant conclusion, that he drew the materials of his anthropology, his conception of the relations of the soul to God and to the Church. For in him the ethical passion rose to its highest power; and as its conflicts marked the crises of his own spiritual history, so did he discern them in like manner writ large in the mighty movements of society around, and the whole destiny of the race. He looked back upon his early years, and he saw them stained with the sins of wayward passion, hurrying him hither and thither, mastering his imperfect resolve, and carrying him captive to his base desires. Suddenly a new force appears within his soul. The affections that before were stubborn and reluctant are now joyous and free. The ideal which he previously recognised, but deliberately set aside—witness his prayer, 'Give me chastity, but not yet'—awakens the ardour of his love. Fresh impulses are born within him. They move spontaneously to what is right. They do not require painful guidance and unwilling control; they leap forward after the good, embracing it with a strenuous joy, and lifting his whole being on to new heights of aspiration and achievement. A change such as this could not possibly be self-wrought. No effort of his own could have re-created his whole inner man. The new life must have come to him from some loftier source. And

this conviction was confirmed by the experience of believers round him, who could look back to a like quickening. For it was a time of more open, if not more real, moral contrasts than our own life for the most part exhibits; and the working of spiritual impulses was more obvious and palpable. Augustine stood in the midst of a social corruption which the decline of ancient faiths had done nothing to arrest, and had, indeed, rather fostered than checked. He saw Christianity infusing vital energy into disorder and decay. It had not yet been degraded into an instrument of hierarchical oppression; it was not sunk in intellectual stagnation; it had not been called to the aid of moral and spiritual tyranny. It was in the full strength of its fresh powers, and the lust and cruelty which heathenism had encouraged, and philosophy had been unable to subdue, were being tamed by the Gospel into innocence and gentleness and goodwill. What power could produce results so unexpected? Whence came these transformations so sudden and so unforeseen? What soul that knew its own former impotence could claim to have achieved them? Who would not see in them the manifestations of the Spirit, the redeeming work of God? How could he doubt that God unsought had found him out, and in spite of his unworthiness had chosen him for his own?

The doctrine of election and predestination thus rooted in his own spiritual life, and supported by the witness of his co-believers, was confirmed on a gigantic scale by the story of the Church. Augustine, the philosopher, might declare time an illusion; but Augustine, as the interpreter of life, recognised in the demonstrations of history the greatest of practical facts. Religion in India had had no conscious history. It had grown, but it had had no knowledge of its growth; it had been transformed, but it could

render no account of its transformations. Augustine, however, found himself in a stream of religious development which could frame a chart of its whole course, and mark each tributary on the way. The philosophy of India, regarding all external forms as alike involved in the same unreality, drew no sharp distinctions between man and beast and tree, nay, even between the realms of living and of inert things. But from this consequence Augustine was saved by the great historical forces which he found behind him. No castes here parted the human race into orders whose barriers none might overleap; the mighty voice of the whole past declared mankind indissolubly one. Instead of the dreary round of cycles of existence, repeated again and again with endless iteration, Augustine recognised one vast propelling power, guiding the entire destinies of the race. It was the divine design, working out the *eruditio*, the education of humanity.* Here, then, is one of those immense contributions to thought for which we are indebted especially to Christianity—the doctrine which science has recently seized for its own purposes and transfigured into a larger scope, till it has ventured to claim it as all its own —the doctrine of the gradual evolution of human progress. Naturally in the teachings of Augustine it is concerned with the forces of morals and religion, as he discerns Law and Prophecy and Gospel imparting successively new aspects of God's truth and fresh energies of righteousness to the broadening consciousness of men. And the climax of the whole is attained in the triumphs of the Church. The great plan of Providence was reaching its fulfilment. It had advanced step by step, attracting at first but little notice, yet never receding: it could afford to wait, for in the still depths of the Eternal Being it had from the first

* *De Civ. Dei*, x. 14.

been ideally complete. But at length the visions of seers were rendered palpable to all. The Jewish people were torn from their homes and dispersed through every land. The seed of the word had grown into a mighty tree, spreading its shelter east and west and north and south; idols were shattered, temples had fallen; the powers of this world, which in defence of those idols and temples had hunted the Christians to death, now confessed themselves conquered, and owned the sway of the unseen King. Why had not Plato wrought what Christ had done? Why had not philosophy overthrown the polluted altars, and quenched the reeking sacrifices, and turned lust into purity, and bidden contention cease? Not there was the way of the divine righteousness, not there the path of faith.* And so the Church stood forth as the unique channel of truth to men. Her claims were vindicated by her victories. She had set forth, small and despised, to win the world, and she had won it. She had declared her message, she had presented her ideal, and her message was accepted, her ideal prevailed. In this vast moral revolution Augustine found the justification of her authority. This is the meaning of his famous reply to the Manicheans, 'I would not believe the Gospel itself did not the Church induce me.'† This is why he flung the traditional usage of infant baptism in the face of the Pelagians as an argument for original sin. This is why he put out all his force to overcome the schism of the Donatists, for schism rent asunder the agency whose whole strength lay in its unity, and threatened to disperse those reserves of moral power which lost their momentum when they ceased to act together, were broken up and

* See among many passages, *Ep.* ccxxxii., cxxxvii. 15, 16; *De Vera Religione*, 3—7.

† *Contra Epist. Man.* 6.

scattered abroad. If you would understand the meaning of the doctrine of fellowship with the Church as the way of salvation, you must study it as it emerges from the great conflict with heathenism. It was formed in passionate revolt against inconceivable iniquity, in passionate dependence on the divine righteousness; it inevitably drew to itself all that was noblest in endeavour and holiest in aspiration; it saved Christianity from dissolution amid a swarm of conflicting sects, and transmitted its moral and spiritual impulses, not indeed fresh as when they issued from the Master's heart, yet still potent enough to achieve vast social transformations, and to live at this hour with an unspent—nay, in this land at least—with a renewed energy and might.

III.

The theology of Augustine, then, and through it much of the theology of the West, exhibits the most striking combination of philosophical speculation with the ethical passion and spiritual religion. To this the story of religious thought in India can present no counterpart. Yet it does bring before us one great phenomenon of surpassing interest, inasmuch as it shows us the first two in the closest union, unsustained by the third. I am not now going to draw a parallel between the rise and growth of Christianity and the rise and growth of Buddhism; I shall hereafter set before you the resemblances between the legend of Buddha and the legend of Christ, and you must draw from them your own conclusions. Nor will I now enumerate in detail the surprising analogies which have been discovered between some later forms of the Buddhist and the Christian ritual. I must content myself with indicating one of the chief points of view for our inquiry—that which makes the

study of Buddhism so profoundly interesting in connection with several modern controversies—what is the secret of this astonishing moral energy, divorced from what appears to us its natural support in religion?

I have said that on one side Buddhism is a philosophy. The Buddha is the one who knows. Like the Brahmanism out of which it sprang, it had its theory of life, embodied in a closely-linked 'chain of causation:' for its full appreciation it demanded earnest and patient thought. This had, no doubt, much to do with the peculiar type of character which it tended to produce. Buddhism, like Brahmanism, found men helplessly drifting in the sea of transmigration. It started from the assumption of the continuous necessity of birth, death, and re-birth. It laid down as the first principle that in a world over which the law of impermanence was absolute—entering into heaven as well as hell, and terminating the happy life of the gods as well as the torments of the wicked—existence could be nothing other than suffering. The salvation of Buddhism, consequently, like that of Brahmanism, was in its first aspect a deliverance from the sorrow and pain involved in the inevitable transitoriness of everything. 'Give up the world,' it cried, therefore; 'surrender the lust of life, and you will find the way of peace.' This was very nearly the language of Brahmanism; but while the older schools had placed the final goal in the union of the self in the heart with the great Self as the Self of the self, Buddhism boldly swept away the doctrine of the Self altogether. There is no Self, it affirmed. The heresy of individuality, the delusion of the existence of a self behind the bodily and mental powers of man, is the first of the ten fetters which the believer must break, ere he can tread the way of holiness. With the denial of the self within the heart, the great Self likewise

disappeared. The eternal Brahmā of the 'lower knowledge,' the personal God, all-wise creator, and almighty sovereign of the world, came under the doom of dissolution, and the supreme abstraction, the impersonal Brahma of the 'higher knowledge,' vanished into the abyss of nothingness.

But while Buddhism had thus shut up the Brahmanic path of salvation, asserting that it only led into the wilderness of delusion, it was bound to open one of its own. Ritual and ceremony had already been declared worthless for the 'higher knowledge,' and Buddhism also would have none of them; but penances and austerities had been accepted as the means of subduing the flesh and opening the inward eye. Against these, however, Buddhism entered its emphatic protest. It would rely upon no outward agencies; what was needed was an inward change. And here, where Brahmanism had been comparatively cold and calm, Buddhism contrived to infuse a vital moral energy, as it insisted on right views, right feelings, right words, right conduct, as the opening stages of the Eight-fold Noble Path. Whither this path ultimately led we cannot now inquire. The natural consequence of the nihilism of its psychology was a doctrine of annihilation; but interesting evidence has recently been brought to show that the recognised teaching of the Buddhist schools kept this in the background, and dexterously left it an open question.* What is of more importance for my present purpose is to remark that this obscurity concerning the end only throws into stronger relief the intensity of the Buddhist grasp on moral realities for their own sake. To those who remain in the world, indeed, the Buddhist teacher promises heaven as the reward of righteousness, while he threatens sinners with hell, much

† Oldenberg, *Buddha*, pp. 276—284.

after the fashion of the coarser preaching of the orthodox Christian, though the Buddhist hell has at least this advantage, that it is not eternal. But to the converted his language is different. He must choose holiness because it is holy, and as such is intrinsically better than low desires and sordid aims: his heart must be filled with love because love is in itself worthier than contention or ill-will. In this realm of moral idealism the conception of salvation as deliverance from suffering—through birth, death, and rebirth—passes into the higher view of it as liberation from evil, release from the bondage of sin. And to those, therefore, who find Buddhism arid and sterile because it is a religion without what we understand by God, it may be replied that no faith is barren which finds in virtue its chief good, no philosophy unproductive which culminates in labour for the welfare of man.

For this is further a distinguishing mark of Buddhism; it is penetrated through and through with the 'enthusiasm of humanity.' Like Christianity, it abolished at once all distinctions of class and race. And like Christianity it exhibited the life of its founder as filled with but one aim, the deliverance of his fellow-men. Renunciation, to deny oneself—service, to minister to others—these words are not the monopoly of Christendom or the secret of Jesus only. In this respect Buddhism awakened far more earnestness of affection and reverence by presenting an exalted personal ideal than was possible for Brahmanism, which had no great historic type. What scene, for instance, can be more pathetic to the discerning heart—in spite of the tedium of the narrative which relates it—than that which tradition places at the outset of the Teacher's career?—a more real temptation than the onset of Māra and his evil hosts. He has attained the fulness of his Buddhahood; he has mas-

tered the chain of causation and found the way to Nirvāna. Why should he not repose in inward calm? 'To beings that are lost in lust and hatred,' he reflected, 'this doctrine will not be easy to understand. If I proclaim it, and other men are not able to understand it, there would result but weariness and annoyance to me.' And when he pondered over this matter, his mind became inclined to remain in quiet and not to preach the doctrine. Then the Great Brahmā, perceiving the reflection in the mind of the Blessed One, thought, 'Alas, the world perishes; alas, the world is destroyed, if the mind of the holy absolute Sambuddha inclines itself to remain in quiet and not to preach the doctrine.' And so he quits his Brahma heaven and ventures into the august presence of the Buddha, and with respectful daring pleads the cause of those who cannot attain salvation if they hear not the truth. The Blessed One is moved; he looks over the world full of compassion towards all sentient beings; he sees them of every disposition and capacity, and he at last replies, 'Wide open is the door of Amata to all who have ears to hear; let them send forth faith to meet it.'* What reformer will not find here an echo of the longings that sometimes rise unbidden in his own breast? What teacher will not confess, at least to himself, that the Buddha's thoughts have sometimes been thought again? But when the trial moment was once over, the Teacher passes on his way with a step that never falters and a purpose that never swerves. The legends are full of illustrations of the courage, the self-sacrifice, the devotion with which the Buddha toiled to win the hearts of men, and they carry the conception back through many lives; they are sometimes beautiful, some-

* Vinaya Pitaka, Mahāvagga, I. v. 2—13, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XIII. pp. 84—88.

times grotesque, but always penetrated with the same essential aim. May I be permitted to vary the monotony of academic discourse by condensing one of these familiar tales, which I will call the story of the Demon with the Matted Hair?*

'Long ago, when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares, the Bodhisat (the future Buddha) was re-born as the son of his chief consort, and on his name-day, in consequence of the prognostications of the Brahmans, he was called Prince Five-Weapons. When he was come to years of discretion, and was sixteen, the king called him and said, 'You must get learning, my dear;' and he sent him to the city of Takkasila. After proper study there, the Prince took the five weapons bestowed on him by his teacher, saluted him, and set out on the road back to Benares. On the way he came to a forest inhabited by a Demon called the Demon of the Matted Hair. At the mouth of the forest some men saw him. 'Young man,' they cried, 'don't enter the forest. The Demon of the Matted Hair lives there, and as soon as he sees any one he makes an end of him.' But the future Buddha, relying on himself like a dauntless lion of mighty mane, entered the forest. When he reached the middle the Demon showed himself. He was as tall as a palm-tree; his head was the size of an attic; he had eyes like saucers, and the mouth of a hawk. 'Whither are you going?' cried he. 'Stop; you are my prey.' The future Buddha warned him off with a poisoned arrow, but it stuck in the Demon's hair. Then he shot another and another, up to fifty, but the Demon brushed them all away, and they fell harmless at his feet. It was the same with his sword and spear and club. But the

* Fausböll, *Jātaka*, Vol. I. pt. ii. p. 272.

dauntless Bodhisat cried, 'O, Demon, you have never heard of me! I am Prince Five-Weapons. I came into this forest relying not on bows and such like, but on myself. Now I will smite you and grind you to powder.' And with a resolute air he hit him with his right hand; but his right hand and his left hand, his right foot and his left foot, were all caught in turn in the Demon's hair, and when at last he butted at him with his head, that was caught too. Fixed in five places, there he hung, but he showed no fear or alarm. 'This is a lion-like fellow, of rare breed,' thought the Demon. 'All the time I've been murdering on this road I never saw his like. Why ever is it that he is not afraid?' And he did not dare to devour him. 'Why ever is it, young man,' he asked, 'that you are not afraid of death?' 'Why should I be, O Demon? We must die once in each existence, and I have a thunderbolt here in my belly which you will not be able to digest if you eat me. It will dash your inside into little pieces and make an end of you; and then we shall both perish! That is why I am not afraid.' But the future Buddha said this concerning the weapon of the Knowledge of the Truth within him. So the terrified Demon released him and bade him go home to his friends. 'O Demon,' said the Bodhisat, 'I will go. But as for you, it was for your wicked conduct formerly that you have been re-born as a cruel demon; if you stay here and go on doing wickedly, you will pass from darkness to darkness. But now that you have seen me, it will not be possible for you to do evil.' By such admonitions did he declare the mischief of unrighteousness and the gain of righteousness, and he expounded the Truth to the Demon and subdued him. Then, converting him to self-denial, he established him in righteousness, and after earnestly exhorting him departed out

of the wood. In due course he succeeded to the kingdom and ruled with righteousness, till he departed according to his deeds.'

The moral is not far to seek. The Demon with the Matted Hair is the world of greed and sensuality swallowing up the unwary. It must be met with defiance and attacked with unshrinking courage. But the world's weapons of violence make no impression on it; they only fall impotent at its feet. Truth alone can defeat error, good alone can overcome evil, self-denial alone can tame passion and lust, love alone can drive out hate. The lesson is an old one, but it is not yet wholly learned. If it was one of the lessons of Jesus, it will not impair it, it will strengthen it, to know that it was taught also in another land and a different speech; for it brings the confirming witness of a fresh experience, and a new insight into the unseen realm of moral relations where so much of our true life is hid.

In Buddhism, then, we discern an immense ethical force, wholly disjoined from those sources of power which we discover in Christianity. We see it create a community, which for want of a better word we must call a Church, and spread from land to land with boundless missionary zeal, till it brings within its simultaneous influence five hundred millions of men. It does not remain the same in the process any more than Christianity remains the same; but the transformations which Buddhism undergoes are even more radical and surprising, for it ends by verifying in the most unexpected manner the adage of the French philosopher that if there were no God it would be necessary to invent one. In proposing it as an object of your study, I am not afraid of doing any injury to your Christian faith. I shall not attempt to conceal my conviction that a philosophy which rejects the doctrine of a soul does not correctly

interpret the facts of our self-consciousness; that a religion without the belief in an everlasting God cannot be accepted as offering a true solution of the world's origin and destiny; that a system which has no conception of history and supplies no hint of progress, cannot provide a right view of human life. If this conviction disqualifies me for impartial judgment, then I must submit to the charge; but I shall reply that our object here is to ascertain as far as we can and to teach the truth, and that object is not to be achieved by suppressing any honestly-matured belief. And, on the other hand, if you should prefer to enrol yourselves among the disciples of Gotama rather than of Jesus—or, for that matter, if, after our study of modern Catholicism, you should think well to accept the Vatican decrees—I shall be surprised, I will not deny that I shall even be grieved, but I can refuse to none the freedom which I exercise, and I shall trust in the ultimate power of the truth that, somewhere and somehow, whichever of us is wrong will be set right. Meanwhile Buddhism, like Christianity, is essentially, in its highest form, the warfare with sin. To this warfare you are consecrating yourselves. In this you are willing to spend and to be spent. Do not refuse, then, whatever help the past can give. 'He that is not against us,' said the Master, 'is on our side.' The moral energies that work in us to-day have been fed by the endeavours of countless generations. And when across the ages there come to us fresh words that awakened brotherly love or opened a way of inward peace in myriads of our fellowmen for centuries or ever Christ was born, we learn that the Ganges, no less than the Jordan, might be a sacred stream—that India as well as Palestine might be hallowed; remote ideas and beliefs are invested with a new sanctity; our faith in Providence becomes deeper and stronger; and

as we decipher the venerable forms of antique speech, still throbbing with human aspiration after righteousness and love, we joyfully recognise that, whatever else may change, truth and right do but grow clearer and clearer.

'One accent of the Holy Ghost
This heedless world has never lost.'

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